

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 10527 271621Z

ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 MC-02 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00

IGA-02 AID-05 INR-07 /041 W

-----100005 271825Z /43

R 271535Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5521

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

OSD/ISA WASHDC

CNO WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 10527

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, MASS, IT

SUBJECT: POLICY ON TRANSFER OF MILITARY TECHNOLOGY TO ITALY:

AIM-9 L MISSILE

1. SUMMARY: FOR MANY MONTHS ITALIAN MOD HAS SHOWN KEEN INTEREST IN ACQUIRING AMI-9 L MISSILE. IT IS THE MOD'S IMPRESSION THAT THERE IS AN IMPEDIMENT TO TRANSFERRING AIM-9 L TECHNOLOGY TO ITALY THAT MAY BE ROOTED IN A CONCERN FOR SECURITY. THE EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT CONCERN, IF IT EXISTS, TO WORK COUNTER TO OUR BROADER OBJECTIVES IN ITALY. PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI (A FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER) MAY RAISE THE ISSUE DURING HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON THIS MONTH. THE EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE LEARNING HOW THIS MATTER WILL BE HANDLED IF THE PRIME MINISTER CHOOSES TO MAKE IT A SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION.

2. IN CONVERSATION WITH DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF ADMIRAL MAININI (MOD), RECENTLY RETURNED FROM STAFF TALKS IN WASHINGTON, POL/MIL COUNSELOR WAS TREATED TO LITANY OF ITALIAN FRUSTRATIONS OVER U.S. ATTITUDE TOWARD TRANSFER OF INFORMATION ON AIM-9 L MISSILES.

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3. ACCORDING TO MAININI, THE ITALIAN-DEVELOPED ASPIDE MISSILE (IN WHICH HE WRYLY NOTED U.S. HAS SHOWN SOME INTEREST) WILL NOT LIKELY GO INTO PRODUCTION BEFORE 1980-81, LEAVING A FOUR-YEAR GAP OF "UNARMED F-104'S". HENCE THE URGENT NEED FOR ABOUT 600 AIM-9 L'S. IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT THE AIM-9 L TECHNOLOGY WOULD BE PASSED TO THE FRG AND OTHER ALLIES. BUT IT WAS

HIS IMPRESSION THAT THERE WAS, UNHAPPLY, SOME
RELUCTANCE " IN THE PENTAGON" OVER CONVEYING TECHNICAL
DATA ON THE AIM SYSTEM TO THE ITALIANS -- PRESUMABLY
ON SECURITY GROUNDS.

4. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE THE ITALIANS HAVE NOT SUBMITTED
A WRITTEN REQUEST FOR THE TECHNICAL BRIEFINGS
THEY WANT, THOUGH SUCH A REQUEST MAY SOON BE FORTH-
COMING. THEY HAVE HOWEVER BEEN SEEKING TECHNICAL DATA
ON THE AIM SYSTEM FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS AND HAVE
APPROACHED US THROUGH SEVERAL CHANNELS --
THEIR EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON AND COMPONENTS
OF THIS MISSION.

5. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF THE RATIONALE BEHIND THE ERECTION
OF THE STONE WALL THE ITALIANS THINK THEY HAVE ENCOUNTERED,
IF INDEED IT EXISTS. IN ANY EVENT, ANY "SECURITY REASONS"
THAT MAY HAVE BEEN ADDUCED IN THIS OR ANY SIMILAR CASE
ARE IN OUR VIEW ILL-CONSIDERED. PRESENT ITALIAN POLITICAL
ARRANGEMENTS MAY BE SHAKY AND AMBIGUOUS BUT WE ARE AWARE
OF NO EVIDENCE THAT THERE IS A CLEAR AND PRESENT RISK OF
A COMPROMISE OF SECURITY. THE GAME IS FAR FROM LOST IN
ITALY. BUT WE CAN HELP HASTEN THE DEMISE OF ITALIAN
DEMOCRACY BY WEAKENING THE ATTACHMENT TO OUR COMMON
PURPOSES AND TO THE ALLIANCE OF THOSE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS
OF GOVERNMENT CHARGED WITH ITALIAN NATIONAL SECURITY.
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IT IS NOT UNLIKELY THAT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE WILL
URGE PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI TO RAISE THE AIM-9L
ISSUE DURING HIS WASHINGTON VISIT. WE HOPE THE
ISSUE WILL BY THEN BE RESOLVED.
GARDNER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLICIES, MISSILES, TECHNOLOGICAL EXCHANGES, INFORMATION CONTROL
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 27-Jun-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977ROME10527
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770229-0384
Format: TEL
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770614/aaaaamjn.tel
Line Count: 99
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 2654da75-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2022120
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLICY ON TRANSFER OF MILITARY TECHNOLOGY TO ITALY: AIM-9 L MISSILE
TAGS: MILI, MASS, IT, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/2654da75-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009